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ABSTRACT

This publication concerning rape committed by acquaintances and "friends" is designed to provide information and support for college students. The early warning signs and how to react to potential "acquaintance" or "date" rape are addressed. Consideration is given to why this type of rape occurs and information is provided on how to avoid date rape and what to do if it occurs. Elements in date rape include use of alcohol and drugs and the woman's giving mixed signals to the male. It is emphasized that acquaintance rape is not simply a crime of passion or merely a result of miscommunication, but is often an attempt to assert power and anger. Twenty ways to avoid situations that might lead to date rape are suggested, including: examining one's feelings about sex and deciding early if sex is desired with a date and having taxi fare or means to leave a date. Attention is also directed to men who accept responsibility not to harm another person, along with danger signals that may identify men whom women should avoid. Suggestions are included on what to do if someone tries to force sexual activity or does commit rape. Three stages of the rape trauma syndrome are covered: trauma, denial, and resolution. How family and friends can help after a rape and legal implications are also discussed. (SW)

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PROJECT ON THE STATUS AND EDUCATION OF WOMEN

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"Friends" Raping Friends

Could It Happen to You?

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Bob and Patty: A Study Date Gone Awry

Bob: "Patty and I were in the same statistics class together. She usually sat near me and was always very friendly. I liked her and thought maybe she liked me, too. Last Thursday I decided to find out. After class I suggested that she come to my place to study for midterms together. She agreed immediately, which was a good sign. That night everything seemed to go perfectly. We studied for a while and then took a break. I could tell that she liked me, and I was attracted to her. I was getting excited. I started kissing her. I could tell that she really liked it. We started touching each other and it felt really good. All of a sudden she pulled away and said 'Stop.' I figured she didn't want me to think that she was 'easy' or 'loose.' A lot of girls think they have to say 'no' at first. I knew once I showed her what a good time she could have, and that I would respect her in the morning, it would be OK. I just ignored her protests and eventually she stopped struggling. I think, she liked it but afterwards she acted bummed out and cold. Who knows what her problem was?"

Patty: "I knew Bob from my statistics class. He's cute and we are both good at statistics, so when a tough midterm was scheduled, I was glad that he suggested we study together. It never occurred to me that it was anything except a study date. That night everything went fine at first, we got a lot of studying done in a short amount of time so when he suggested we take a break I thought we deserved it. Well, all of a sudden he started acting really romantic and started kissing me. I liked the kissing but then he started touching me below the waist. I pulled away and tried to stop him but he didn't listen. After a while I stopped struggling; he was hurting me and I was scared. He was so much bigger and stronger than me. I couldn't believe it was happening to me. I didn't know what to do. He actually forced me to have sex with him. I guess looking back on it I should have screamed or done something besides trying to reason with him but it was so unexpected. I couldn't believe it was happening. I still can't believe it did."

Introduction

When you hear the word "rape," what do you think of? If you imagine a stranger jumping out of the bushes on a dark night and attacking someone, you are only partly right—because most rapes are not committed by strangers but by men who know their victims, who often have gone out with them previously and are supposedly their friends. This phenomenon is called "acquaintance" or "date" rape.

Acquaintance rape is forced, unwanted intercourse with a person you know. It is a violation of your body and your trust. It is an act of violence. It can be with someone you have just met, or dated a few times, or even with someone to whom you are engaged. The force involved can come from threats or tone of voice, as well as from physical force or weapons. Experts estimate that as many as 90 percent of all rapes are never reported; in those that are reported, about 60 percent of the victims know their assailants.[1] Of these, women 15 to 25 years old are the majority of victims.[2]

In 1985 Mary Koss, a professor at Kent State University, surveyed approximately 7,000 students on thirty-two campuses on behalf of *Ms.* magazine and found that one in eight women were the victims of rape. One in every twelve men admitted to having forced a woman to have intercourse or tried to force a woman to have intercourse through physical force or coercion; that is, admitted to raping or attempting to rape a woman. Virtually none of these men, however, identified themselves as rapists. Similarly, only 57 percent of the women who had been raped labeled their experience as rape; the other 43 percent had not even acknowledged to themselves that they had been raped.[3]

Date rape occurs on virtually all campuses, small or large, private or public, rural or urban. Unfortunately, it cannot always be prevented. The more you know about it, however, the more likely it is that you can avoid being put in a situation where it could occur. You can learn the early warning signs and how to react to them. The majority of men are not rapists but some are. In this booklet we hope to show you what to watch out for, why it occurs, and what to do should it happen to you or a friend. Thinking and talking about acquaintance rape and what you might do if you find yourself in a bad situation can increase your chances of avoiding rape.

Because the overwhelming majority of rapes are committed by men, we will refer throughout this booklet to the rapist as "he" and the victim as "she." We will use "acquaintenance rape" and "date rape" interchangeably.

Written by JEAN O'GORMAN HUGHES, *Research Associate, and* BERNICE R. SANDLER, *Executive Director, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges.*

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How Does Date Rape Usually Occur?

Date rapes typically occur when a woman is alone with a man. If you go to a man's room or apartment or even get into his car alone, you are vulnerable. Date rapes can occur when others are relatively close by; for example, they can take place in an upstairs bedroom while fifty people are attending a party on the first floor.

Alcohol and drugs are sometimes a significant factor in date rape. Many victims say later that they drank too much or took too many drugs to realize what was going on; by the time they realized their predicament, it was too late. Sometimes a woman passes out and awakens to find a man having sex with her. On the other hand, some date rapes occur when alcohol is not involved or when the victim has had little or nothing to drink but the man has been drinking and becomes sexually aggressive.

Mixed signals are another element in date rape. The woman acts in a friendly manner; the man interprets this friendliness as an invitation to have sex. "No" is heard as "maybe" and even a strong protest can be ignored under the delusion that women say "no" when they mean "yes." Some men find it sexually exciting to have a woman struggle. If the woman protests only mildly, the man may think he is merely "persuading" her, not forcing her to have sex. (He may think the same, however, even if she protests vigorously.) Sometimes a woman is not clear in her own mind about what she wants or she may think she will make up her mind as she goes along. If she changes her mind at some point and decides not to have sex, the man can feel cheated, rejected, and angry. He may be interpreting her nonverbal messages, such as her enjoyment of kissing and caressing, as meaning that she wants to have sex with him. At this point he may decide he has been teased or misled and "deserves" to get some satisfaction, regardless of the woman's wishes. The result can be rape.

Although acquaintance rape is often a spontaneous act, many are planned, some days in advance, others in the preceding hour(s). Sometimes men plan to have sex with a woman even if they have to force the issue. These men have typically forced sex before and gotten away with it. They usually look for victims who are unassertive; perhaps someone who is not very popular and would be flattered to go on a date with him. Needless to say, these men do not see themselves as repeat rapists; they are merely "out to have a good time."

What Are the Causes of Date Rape?

There is no one direct cause of date rape. Although there are usually three key elements involved, socialization, miscommunication, and/or changing sexual mores, one major reason for date rape is a lack of consideration for a woman's rights and wishes.

In a general sense, traditional male and female roles in society are part of the problem. Men are taught at a very early age to be aggressors; they participate in aggressive team sports, are encouraged to be competitive, not to give up, to keep on trying. They are encouraged to have strong sexual feelings and to experiment with their sexual satisfaction as a part of their masculinity. This environment which encourages men to be competitive and get what they want often leads to a belief in the "right to have sex." Women on the other hand are socialized to be more passive, dependent, to be peacemakers, to avoid scenes, to be "lady-like." They are discouraged from experimenting with their sexuality: "Good girls don't fool around." The double standard allows men to have sexual feelings and act on them; in contrast, a woman is allowed to be sexual primarily when she becomes "carried away" with emotion.

Communication between men and women is often problematical, especially in the realm of sex. Especially in a first sexual encounter with someone, some women may say "no" when they mean "maybe" or even "yes," and men have been taught to try to turn that no/maybe into a yes. Thus, it is sometimes hard for men to know when "no" really does mean "no." Women, on the other hand, don't want to agree to sex too readily for fear they will be seen as "loose" or "easy." Misperceptions abound; a woman thinks she is merely being friendly, but her date thinks she's signaling willingness to have sex. Furthermore, stereotypes about women as passive and submissive can also foster a climate for sexual assaults.

The last few decades have seen a general loosening of sexual standards. With the advent of the birth control pill, many people are sexually active at younger ages than previously, including many college-age women and men. Thus, many college-age men may expect sex as a given after they have gone out with someone a few times. Sometimes the woman shares this expectation, but sometimes she does not. Some men believe they are entitled to sex when they have spent money on a date. Others may believe that if a woman is sexually active, she will willingly have sex with anyone, including him.

Acquaintance rape, however, is not simply a crime of passion, or merely a result of miscommunication. It is, instead, often an attempt to assert power and anger. Some men are sexually aggressive because they are basically insecure. Forcing sex on another person makes them feel strong because it makes someone else feel weak. Rape is violence against a woman. It is an issue that strikes at the heart of the personal relationship between a man and a woman, how they treat each other, and how they respect each other's wishes. People who respect others do not coerce others to do things they do not want to do.

Seduction vs. Rape

One of the key questions in the issue of date rape is the difference between seduction and rape: the man feels he has merely seduced a woman, the woman feels that she was raped. A useful distinction to keep in mind is that seduction involves no force, implied or otherwise. Seduction occurs when a woman is manipulated or cajoled into agreeing to have sex; the key word is "agreeing." Acquaintance rape often occurs when seduction fails and the man goes ahead and has sex with the woman anyway, despite any protests and without her agreement.

What You Can Do to Avoid Situations That Might Lead to Date Rape

You can't always avoid date rape. Nevertheless, there are some things you can do to minimize your chances of being raped.

■ *Examine your feelings about sex.* Many women have been socialized to believe that sex means that they will be swept away with the emotion of the moment or that they can "make out" and then decide whether to say "yes" or "no" to sex later. The problem with this kind of thinking is that it gives too much control to the other person.

■ *Set sexual limits.* It is your body, and no one has the right to force you to do anything you do not want to do. If you do not want someone to touch you or kiss you, for example, you can say "Take your hands off me," or "Don't touch me," or "If you don't respect my wishes right now, I'm leaving." Stopping sexual activity doesn't mean that anything is wrong with you, or that you're not a "real" woman.

■ *Decide early if you would like to have sex.* The sooner you communicate firmly and clearly your sexual intentions the easier it will be for your partner to hear and accept your decision.

■ *Do not give mixed messages; be clear.* Say "yes" when you mean "yes" and say "no" when you mean "no." (The ability to be assertive can be developed by training and practice.)

■ *Be alert to other unconscious messages you may be giving.* Men may interpret your behavior differently from what you intended. Often women and men send strong nonverbal signs of willingness to enter a sexual relationship and unintentional signals that might conflict with their words, and thereby contribute to sexual assault. Be aware of signals you send with your posture, clothing, tone of voice, gestures, and eye contact.

■ *Be forceful and firm.* Do not worry about not being "polite." Often men interpret passivity as permission; they may ignore or misunderstand "nice" or "polite" approaches. Say something like "Stop this. I'm not enjoying it," or "Your behavior is not encouraging an open relationship between us." If a woman ignores sexual activity she does not like, a man is likely to interpret that as tacit approval for him to continue. Men are not mind readers.

■ *Be independent and aware on your dates.* Do not be totally passive. Do have opinions on where to go. Do think about appropriate places to meet (not necessarily at your room or his), and, if possible, pay your own way or suggest activities that do not cost any money.

■ *Do not do anything you do not want to just to avoid a scene or unpleasantness.* Women have been socialized to be polite. In an effort to be nice, they may be reluctant to yell or run away or escape being attacked. Do not be raped because you were too polite to get out of a dangerous situation. If you are worried about hurting his feelings, remember, he is ignoring your feelings. Be aware of how stereotypes about women may affect your behavior. Accepting beliefs that "women shouldn't express themselves strongly" or that "anger is unfeminine" make women more vulnerable.

■ *Be aware of specific situations in which you do not feel relaxed and in charge.* Unwillingness to acknowledge a situation as potentially dangerous and reluctance to appear oversensitive often hold women back from responding in the interest of their own safety. For example, avoid attending or staying late at parties where men greatly outnumber women. Don't be afraid to leave early because it might seem rude. Situations where there are few women around can quickly get out of hand.

■ *If things start to get out of hand, be loud in protesting, leave, go for help.* Do not wait for someone else to rescue you or for things to get better. If it feels uncomfortable, leave quickly.

■ *Trust your gut-level feelings.* If you feel you are being pressured, you probably are, and you need to respond. If a situation feels bad, or you start to get nervous about the way your date is acting, confront the person immediately or leave the situation as quickly as possible.

■ *Be aware that alcohol and drugs are often related to acquaintance rape.* They compromise your ability (and that of your date) to make responsible decisions. If you choose to drink alcohol, drink responsibly. Be able to get yourself home and do not rely on others to "take care" of you.

■ *Avoid falling for such lines as "You would if you loved me."* If he loves you, he will respect your feelings and will wait until you are ready.

■ *If you are unsure of a new acquaintance, go on a group or double date.* If this is not possible, meet him in a public place and have your own transportation home.

■ *Have your own transportation, if possible, or taxi fare.* At least for the first few dates, this establishes your independence and makes you appear to be a less vulnerable target.

■ *Avoid secluded places where you are in a vulnerable position.* This is especially critical at the beginning of a relationship. Establish a pattern of going where there are other people, where you feel comfortable and safe. This will give you a chance to get to know your date better and decide if you wish to continue dating him.

■ *Be careful when you invite someone to your home or you are invited to his home.* These are the most likely places where acquaintance rapes occur.

■ *Examine your attitudes about money and power.* If he pays for the date does that influence your ability to say "no"? If so, then pay your own way or suggest dates that do not involve money.

■ *Think about the pros and cons of dating much older men.* Although they may be sophisticated and have the money to treat you well, they may also be more sexually experienced and may therefore expect more sooner.

■ *Socialize with people who share your values.* If you go out with people who are more sexually permissive than you are, you may be perceived as sharing those values.

Remember . . .

It is possible to be aware without being afraid; to take responsibility for your own behavior without being a prude; to request that others not violate your space and your privacy without putting them down.

—*When 'No' is Not Enough, Date Rape on the College Campus*, pamphlet, Auburn University, AL

Real Men Don't Rape

Real men accept the responsibility to not harm another person.

- It is *never* OK to force yourself on a woman, even if
  - she teases you
  - dresses provocatively or leads you on
  - she says "no" and you think she means "yes"
  - you've had sex before with her
  - you've paid for her dinner or given her expensive gifts
  - you think women enjoy being forced to have sex or want to be persuaded
  - the woman is under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Rape is a crime of violence. It is motivated primarily by desire to control and dominate, rather than by sex. It is illegal.
- If you are getting a double message from a woman, speak up and clarify what she wants. If you find yourself in a situation with a woman who is unsure about having sex or is saying "no," back off. Suggest talking about it.
- Do not assume you know what your partner wants; check out your assumptions.
- Be sensitive to women who are unsure whether they want to have sex. If you put pressure on them, you may be forcing them.
- Do not assume you both want the same degree of intimacy. She may be interested in some sexual contact other than intercourse. There may be several kinds of sexual activity you might mutually agree to share.
- Stay in touch with your sexual desires. Ask yourself if you are really hearing what she wants. Do not let your desires control your actions.
- Communicate your sexual desires honestly and as early as possible.
- If you have *any* doubts about what your partner wants, *STOP. ASK. CLARIFY.*
- Your *desires* may be beyond your control, but your *actions* are within your control. Sexual excitement does not justify forced sex.
- Do not assume her desire for affection is the same as a desire for intercourse.
- Not having sex or not "scoring" does not mean you are not a "real man." It is OK not to "score."
- A woman who turns you down for sex is not necessarily rejecting you as a person; she is expressing her decision not to participate in a single act at that time.
- No one *asks* to be raped. No matter how a woman behaves, she does not deserve to have her body used in ways she does not want.
- "No" means *no*. If you do not accept a woman's "no," you might risk raping someone whom you *thought* meant "yes."
- Taking sexual advantage of a person who is mentally or physically incapable of giving consent (for example, drunk) is rape. If a woman has had too much to drink and has passed out, or is not in control of herself, having sex with her is rape.
- The fact that you were intoxicated is not a legal defense to rape. You are responsible for your actions, whether you are sober or not.
- Be aware that a man's size and physical presence can be intimidating to a woman. Many victims report that the fear they felt based on the man's size and presence was the reason why they did not fight back or struggle.

Note: Men can be victims of rape and have the same rights to counseling and legal action as women do.

Danger Signals: Watch Out for These Men

Unfortunately, a nice, normal man can turn into a date rapist. However, there are some men who are more likely to be sexually aggressive than others. Watch out for:

- men who do not listen to you, ignore what you say, talk over you or pretend not to hear you. Such men generally have little respect for women and would be more likely to hear "no" as meaning "convince me."
- men who ignore your personal space boundaries.
- men who express anger or aggression towards women as individuals or in general. Hostile feelings can easily be translated into hostile acts. Such men often get hostile when a woman says "no."
- men who do what they want regardless of what you want. If a man does this in little ways—for example, if he makes all the decisions about what to do and where to go without asking your opinion—then he may also be likely to make the decision about whether you are ready to have sex with him.
- men who try to make you feel guilty, or accuse you of being "uptight" if you resist their sexual overtures.
- men who act excessively jealous or possessive.
- men who have wrong or unrealistic ideas about women (for example, "women are meant to serve men"). Such men are not likely to take your objections to sex seriously.
- men who drink heavily. A "mean drunk" can often get sexually aggressive, angry, or violent if he is rejected.

What Should You Do If Someone Tries to Force Sexual Activity on You?

- Stay calm and think. Figure out what your options are and how safe it is to resist.
- Say "no" strongly. Do not smile; do not act friendly or polite.
- Say something like "Stop it. This is rape." This might shock the rapist into stopping.
- Assess the situation. Figure out how you can escape. Are

there any other people around?

■ Look for an escape route. If you can figure out a way to distract him, you can sometimes escape.

■ Act quickly, if possible. The longer you stay in the situation, the fewer your options.

■ Ask yourself if it is safe to resist. This is a critical question. Women who fight back initially, who hit and scream, have a much higher chance of avoiding the successful completion of an assault than women who plead or try to talk their way out of the situation. Nevertheless, resistance will depend on one main question: is he armed?

■ If the man is UNARMED, then you have many options, including:

- fight back physically—punch him in the Adam's apple, poke your finger in his eye, hit him with a lamp or other item, or kick him. Fight so that you can escape, as it is difficult for most women to incapacitate a man. Resistance may discourage the man or convince him that it is too much trouble to continue. Resist only as long as it is safe to do so. If resistance is dangerous, stop.
- run away. There is no shame in escaping a dangerous situation.
- say you have to use the bathroom, and then leave.
- shout "fire." If you shout "help," some people will tend not to want to be involved in someone else's problem. "Fire" concerns them and they are more likely to respond.
- use passive resistance (pretend to faint, throw up).
- use intimidation (lie; tell him your male roommate is on the way home; tell him you have herpes or VD).
- try to talk him out of it—try to appeal to his humanity, his sense of decency.
- gain his confidence so that he might let his guard down and you can escape.
- try to get him to see you as an individual person. Make him aware of the effect he is having on you. Tell him that he is hurting you.

■ If the man is ARMED, then

- try to talk him out of it.
- try passive resistance.

Your options are obviously a lot more limited when the man is armed with a weapon. In those situations you are taking your life in your hands if you decide to fight back. It may be possible to run away, if he is distracted, but only do this if you are reasonably sure you can get away.

What To Do If You Are Raped

■ *Go to a friend's.* This is not the time to be alone. At the very least, you need emotional support. If there is no one to go to, then call someone you can talk to, no matter how late it is.

■ *Get medical attention.* Do not shower or clean yourself first. As soon as possible, go to a hospital or school health center to be examined and treated for possible venereal disease. You may have internal injuries which you are not aware of. If you decide to press charges, physical specimens collected soon after the rape will be valuable evidence.

■ *Report the attack to police and university or college officials,* whether or not you plan to file charges. (Reporting a rape does not commit you to filing charges. You can make that decision later.) Have someone go with you. You can go the next day, but the sooner the better. Rarely do date rapists attack one woman only; they get away with it and so they continue to do it. If you turn him in, you may break that pattern and save someone else from being attacked.

■ *Consider whether you want to file charges with the police* and/or with the campus authorities if the man is a student (see p. 7). If you do decide to press charges, the chances of conviction with acquaintance rape are low, although police, judges, and schools are increasingly more sympathetic than in the past. Some states now have rape shield laws, so that the past sexual behavior of a woman cannot be brought up.

■ *Get help and support, such as counseling.* At the very least, call a rape or crisis hot line. Many schools and communities have them. Your school counseling center, student health center, or local sexual assault center also may be of help. You have been through a trauma and need help to deal with the situation and with your feelings. Women who get counseling get over their experiences faster and with fewer lasting effects than those who get no help.

■ *Write a letter*[4] *to the rapist.* There is a particular kind of a letter that victims of sexual harassment have often used to stop harassment that can be used by a rape victim who knows her attacker. The letter consists of three parts:

- Part I is a *factual* account of what has happened *without any evaluation*, as seen by the writer. (People usually agree with the facts but disagree with the interpretation.) It should be as detailed as possible with dates, places, and a description of the incident.
- Part II describes how the writer feels about the events described in part I, such as shame, misery, distrust, anger, fear, and revulsion, such as "I feel humiliated," "I feel I was exploited."
- Part III consists of what the writer wants to happen next.
- The letter is delivered by registered or certified mail. Copies are not sent to anyone else.
- A sample letter, which can be of any length: "Dear John, On November 23d you and I went to the movies and afterwards you invited me to your room to see your softball trophies. When you kissed me, I enjoyed it but then you started undressing me and when I asked you to stop, you didn't. Then you forced me to have sex with you. I trusted you and you betrayed me. You ignored my protests and used me. I was so upset that I wasn't able to go to class the next day. I cried a lot, and I'm also having trouble sleeping. I think you are disgusting. I don't ever want to go out with you again or even talk with you and I hope you never do this to anyone else."

Writing the letter can give the victim a sense of doing something constructive about the situation. It can also give the man a new perception of how his behavior is viewed by others.

■ *Do not blame yourself.* Many people assume that the man is *expected* to ask for sex and the woman is responsible for giving *permission* for sex. Thus the woman may feel it is her fault for not having said "no" more clearly or for having trusted the man in the first place. Some men and women may also blame the

victim and offer little or no sympathy. Men may believe you must have somehow "led on" the rapist; some women may suggest you either used poor judgment or have a bad reputation, so it is your own fault. In both cases, they are trying to distance themselves from what happened. If you find that you are being blamed for what happened, it is helpful to go to a counseling center, a rape crisis center, or call a hotline. You need to be reassured that you are not to blame; the rapist is. Even if your body responded sexually to the rapist, it does not mean you "enjoyed" the experience or that it is your fault. Even if you believe you were naive, not cautious, or even foolish, it is not your fault. Your behavior did not *cause* the rape; the rapist caused the rape.

What Are the Effects of Date Rape?

Different people react to stress and trauma differently. However, most rape victims go through definable stages of rape trauma syndrome. This syndrome is comprised of three parts: trauma, denial, and resolution.

- **Trauma**
  - *Fear of being alone.* This may be especially acute shortly after the rape but can also continue for a while afterwards.
  - *Fear of men.* Some women may be fearful and angry at all men. Counseling can be especially helpful in preventing this from becoming a longlasting problem. Victims of date rape, especially, are left doubting their choice of partners and wondering how they can ever again date safely and if they will be able to trust themselves and others.
  - *Sexual problems.* For some people, these may continue for a long time since the sexual act now has been associated with so many negative feelings. Again, counseling can often be helpful in overcoming these problems.
  - *Depression.* This can sometimes come and go over a long period of time. Generally, the more a survivor can talk about her situation, the less severe the depression.
  - *Fear of retaliation.* Unfortunately, this may be a legitimate fear, especially if charges are pressed. However, such retaliation is in itself illegal, and can result in additional charges. Any threat of retaliation should be reported immediately to the institution and/or the police. If this is not sufficient, a lawyer should be contacted to help obtain a restraining order and explore additional options.
  - *Afraid to trust.* This may manifest itself long after the actual rape has occurred when the survivor begins to date again and wonders if it will happen once more.
  - *Concern over reactions from family/friends.* It is not always

Family and Friends: How to Help

After a rape, survivors may be openly upset, even hysterical, or they may be numb and seemingly calm. The victim needs to:

- *Obtain medical assistance.*
- *Feel safe.* Rape is a traumatic violation of a person. Especially in the beginning, it is often difficult for victims to be alone.
- *Be believed.* With date rape especially, victims need to be believed that what occurred was, in fact, a rape.
- *Know it was not her fault.* Most rape victims feel guilty and feel that the attack was somehow their fault.
- *Take control of her life.* When a person is raped, she may feel completely out of control of what is happening to her. A significant step on the road to recovery is to regain a sense of control in little, as well as big, things.

Things you can do to help:

- *Listen; do not judge.* It is not your place to play prosecutor and make her prove her story. Accept her version of the facts and be supportive. You may have to deal with your feelings separately if you feel that it was somehow her fault. Many rape counseling services can be helpful to friends and relatives of women who have been victims.
- *Offer shelter.* If it is at all possible, stay with her at her place or let her at least spend one night at your place. This is not the time for her to be alone.
- *Be available.* She may need to talk at odd hours, or a great deal at the beginning. She may not have a lot of people she can talk to and she may overrely on one person. Be there as much as you can and encourage her to either call a hotline or go for counseling.
- *Give comfort.* She has been badly treated. She needs to be nurtured.
- *Let her know she is not to blame.* This is crucial. Many rape victims blame themselves. She needs to be reassured that the rapist is to blame, she is not.
- *Be patient and understanding.* Everyone has her own timetable for recovering from a rape. Do not impose one on the victim.
- *Encourage action*—for example, suggest she call a hotline, go to a hospital or health center, and/or call the police. Respect her decision if she decides not to file charges.
- *Do not be overly protective;* encourage her to make her own decisions. She needs to feel in control of her life and this will not be possible if you do everything for her.
- *Accept her choice of solution to the rape*—even if you disagree with what she is doing. It is more important that she make decisions and have them respected than it is for you to impose what you think is the "right" decision.
- *Put aside your feelings, and deal with them somewhere else.* Although it is supportive for a rape survivor to know that others are equally upset with what happened, it does her no good if on top of her feelings, she also has to deal with, for example, your feelings of rage and anger. If you have strong feelings, talk to another friend or to a local hotline.

necessary for a survivor to tell her family and/or all of her friends if she is very sure that they will not support her and will react badly. However, family and close friends may be more supportive than the victim anticipates.

- *Physical problems.* These include venereal disease, as well as physical symptoms of stress, such as stomachaches, headaches, back problems, inability to sleep, or diminished appetite.
- *Feelings of anger, helplessness, guilt, pain, embarrassment, or anxiety.* These are all typical reactions and generally disappear with time. In any case, keep in mind that whatever happened and however it happened, rape is the fault of the rapist, not the victim.

■ **Denial**

- *Not wanting to talk about it.* There is a sense of wanting to get on with life and put the experience in the past. This may, in fact, last for months.

■ **Resolution**

- *Dealing with fears and feelings.* The primary way to work through these feelings is to talk to someone, be it a friend, member of the clergy, hotline, or counselor.
- *Regaining a sense of control over life.* This will happen usually only after a victim has dealt with her fears and feelings. At this point, she will be ready to put the experience behind her and get on with her life; she is ready to be in charge again.

Legal Implications

Women who have been raped by an acquaintance have the same options as those raped by strangers. They can press criminal and/or civil charges against the man who raped them. In general, date rapes are often difficult to prove. A gun or knife is rarely used and so it is harder for a woman to prove that she was forced to have sex. It is almost always his word against hers. The man's attorney may argue that the woman "wanted" to have sex with his client, did so, and then thought better of it and so charged rape. The woman has to prove that she did not want sex, resisted, and was overpowered.

Unfortunately, date rapists rarely rape only once. If a woman does go ahead and press charges, there is a chance that she will be able to stop the rapist from hurting other people. Pressing charges also helps many rape victims regain a sense of control over their lives; they are taking some positive action. A pamphlet from Stanford University, *Working Against Rape*, describes the dilemma:

> The decision to press charges is difficult and important. As more women force their courts and communities to deal with rape, awareness about rape increases. By pressing charges women claim the right to have the crime taken seriously. Legal proceedings may help prevent other women from suffering a rape.... Conviction rates have increased ... in recent years. Some women press charges to demonstrate that they will not be passive when they are threatened. When women fight back—both literally and through the courts—men might not rape as easily. A woman who presses charges can decide for any reason, at any time, to drop them.

On the other hand, some women decide not to press charges because they don't want their personal lives and rape experience aired publicly. Sometimes women's anger and desire to act are limited by the time and stamina needed for a court case, and there are often educational or economic barriers to pursuing a case. Often women protest the fact that the man's and victim's race and class unfairly determine how they are treated in court. Some women don't want to jail rapists as a response to rape. And some avoid pressing charges because they fear retaliation, although even in cases when a rapist threatens to return if he is reported, repeat rapes are uncommon.

In some cases a woman's legal counsel will advise against pressing charges. It is difficult to get a trial, let alone a conviction, when the victim is raped by a husband or boyfriend, is hitchhiking, or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the rape.

In addition to—or apart from—bringing criminal charges, a woman may also have the option of suing the individual man who raped her. Laws of evidence are less strict for civil suits so even if she does not file a criminal suit, or if she loses a criminal suit, it is still possible in some instances to collect damages. Some victims have filed suit against an institution or fraternity (if the rape took place at a fraternity function). If the perpetrator is a minor, the victim may be able to sue his parents. A woman should discuss these options with a knowledgeable attorney. Again, since date rape is so difficult to prove, a woman might spend a great deal of money in attorney's fees and lose the case.

Additionally, in some colleges and universities, it is possible to file a charge against a student who has violated the institution's rules. A woman can choose to file charges in her institution regardless of what she does in relation to criminal and civil charges. In some instances, the rapist has been suspended from school.

Conclusion

All rape is traumatic but there is something particularly traumatic about a woman being raped by someone she knows and previously had liked and trusted. Although only a small percentage of men commit date rape, these men do a disproportionate amount of harm. As women become more aware of what date rape is and how it occurs, they may be able to lower the chances of it happening to them. Rape is not a private issue but a public one. Acquaintance rape cannot be considered solely a "personal" issue involving a particular man and a particular woman. It is a problem that concerns all men and all women because it deals with the basic issue of the ways in which men and women relate to each other. There is a need for colleges and universities to have rape prevention programs not only to help women protect themselves but to help men understand the issue of rape and thereby make the college campus a safer environment for everyone.

Phil and Cindy: The Same Story But Two Different Points of View

Phil: "I still don't understand what happened. Cindy and I had been dating for about two months and while we had not slept together yet, I had certainly made it clear that I was very attracted to her and eventually expected to have sex with her. We were supposed to go to a party and when she showed up in this sexy low-cut dress I thought maybe this was her way of saying she was ready. At the party we drank some beer, which made her sort of sleepy and sensual. When she said she wanted to go lie down and have me come snuggle with her, what was I supposed to think? Of course I thought she wanted to have sex. Granted, she did grumble a little when I started to undress her but I just figured she wanted to be persuaded. Lots of women feel a little funny about being forward and want men to take responsibility for sex. I don't know. We had sex and it was fine. I took her home from the party and I thought everything was OK. But ever since then she refuses to talk to me or go out with me. I thought she really liked me. What happened?"

Cindy: "I'll never forget that night as long as I live. Phil and I had been dating a while and he had always acted like a perfect gentleman—well, we had done our share of kissing but he never gave me any reason not to trust him. The night of the party I wore this gorgeous dress that I borrowed from my roommate. It was a little flashier than I normally wear but I thought it was very flattering. At the party I had some beer and it made me really tired so I wanted to lie down. Maybe I shouldn't have suggested we both lie down together but it felt weird to just go upstairs by myself and leave Phil all alone. The next thing I know he was all over me, forcing me to have sex with him. It was horrible. I didn't want to scream and make a fool of myself with all those other people in the next room but I tried to fight him off. I guess I was just too wiped out to be very effective. Needless to say, I never want to see Phil again. He seemed like such a nice guy. What happened?"

Notes

[1]In one study by the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, 92 percent of adolescent rape victims said they were acquainted with their attackers. Reported in *Newsweek*, April 9, 1984.

[2]McDermott, Joan, *Rape Victimization in 26 American Cities*, 1979. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice as cited in Pauline B. Bart and Patricia H. O'Brien, *Stopping Rape*, Pergamon Press, NY, 1985, p. 131.

[3]As cited in Ellen Sweet, "Date Rape: The Story of an Epidemic and Those Who Deny It," *Ms.*, October 1985, p. 56.

[4]Based on an article, "Dealing With Sexual Harassment," written by Mary P. Rowe, which appears in the May-June 1981 *Harvard Business Review*. Subsequently developed into a paper focusing on sexual harassment on campus and written by Bernice R. Sandler, *Writing a Letter to the Sexual Harasser: Another Way of Dealing with the Problem* is available from the Project on the Status and Education of Women of the Association of American Colleges as part of a packet of papers dealing with sexual harassment on campus, which costs $5.00.

Brief List of Resources

Avoiding Rape On and Off Campus by Carol Pritchard, 1985, 59 pages. Available for $4.95 (prepaid) from State College Publishing Co., P.O. Box 209, Wenonah, NJ 08090. Bulk rates are available.

Campus Gang Rape: Party Games? by Julie K. Ehrhart and Bernice R. Sandler, 1985, 20 pages. Part of a packet of information on rape available for $5.00 from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

"Date Rape: The Story of an Epidemic and Those Who Deny It" by Ellen Sweet. *Ms.*, October 1985, p. 56.

Recovery: How to Survive Sexual Assault for Women, Men, Teenagers, and Their Friends and Families by Helen Benedict, 1985, 293 pages. Available for $15.95 from Doubleday and Co., Inc., 501 Franklin Ave., Garden City, NY 11530, attn: Direct Mail Order Division.

"Real Rape" by Susan Estrich (in press), 176 pages. Available for $15.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling from Harvard University Press, 79 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies by Pauline B. Bart and Patricia H. O'Brien, 1985, 201 pages. Available for $11.95 (softcover) from Pergamon Press, Inc., Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523, attn: Order Dept. Please specify ISBN #0-08- 032813-X.

This booklet, although intended to help prevent acquaintance rape or to alleviate its effects, is furnished as a service only. Acquaintance rape is not always avoidable and its aftereffects may vary from person to person in ways that we cannot foresee. Therefore, no one can guarantee that our suggestions will be appropriate for or successful in every situation. The Project on the Status and Education of Women and the Association of American Colleges shall not be liable for any damages arising from the information presented in this booklet.

The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution of the colleges and universities that have produced their own pamphlets on date rape and form the basis for many of the ideas in this booklet. Among the most useful are: *Date Rape: Crossed Signals on a Saturday Night*, Plymouth State College, NH; *When "No!" is Not Enough*, Auburn University, AL; *From Rape Awareness Comes Rape Prevention*, Siena Heights College, MI; *Sex and Rape, TV Style*, and *Resources Against Sexual Assault*, University of California–Santa Cruz; *Resources Against Sexual Assault*, University of California–San Francisco; and *Date Rape Reality*, Western Michigan University.

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